

Ch 21 The Roaring Life of the 1920s

Section 1 Changing Ways of Life

Rural and Urban Differences

The New Urban Scene

- 1920 census: 51.2% of Americans in communities of 2,500 or more
- 1920s crime increased
- 1922–1929, nearly 2 million people leave farms, towns each year
- Largest cities are New York, Chicago, Philadelphia
 - 65 other cities with 100,000 people or more
- In 1920s, people caught between rural, urban cultures
 - close ties, hard work, strict morals of small towns
 - anonymous crowds, moneymaking, pleasure seeking of cities

The Prohibition Experiment

- 18th Amendment launches Prohibition era
 - supported by religious groups, rural South, West
- **Prohibition**—production, sale, transportation of alcohol illegal
- Government does not budget enough money to enforce the law

Speakeasies and Bootleggers

- **Speakeasies** (hidden saloons, nightclubs) become fashionable
- People distill liquor, buy prescription alcohol, sacramental wine
- **Bootleggers** smuggle alcohol from surrounding countries

Organized Crime

- Prohibition contributes to organized crime in major cities
- Al Capone controls Chicago liquor business by killing competitors
- By mid-1920s, only 19% support Prohibition
- 18th Amendment in force until 1933; repealed by 21st Amendment

Science and Religion Clash

American Fundamentalism

- **Fundamentalism**—movement based on literal interpretation of Bible
- Fundamentalists skeptical of some scientific discoveries, theories
 - reject theory of evolution
- Believe all important knowledge can be found in Bible

The Scopes Trial

- 1925, Tennessee passes law making it a crime to teach evolution
- American Civil Liberties Union backs John T. Scopes challenge of law
- **Clarence Darrow**, most famous trial lawyer of day, defends Scopes
- Fundamentalist William Jennings Bryan is special prosecutor
- **Scopes trial**—debates evolution, role of science, religion in school
 - national sensation; thousands attend
- Bryan admits Bible open to interpretation; Scopes found guilty